

# MAIB

MARINE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BRANCH

## FLYER TO SHIPPING INDUSTRY

### ***KATHRIN:* GROUNDING**



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On 12 February 2006, the 2999grt combi freighter *Kathrin* was on passage from Aviles, Spain, to New Holland on the River Humber, England, when she grounded on the Goodwin Sands in the Dover Strait. The vessel remained aground for 15 minutes, before re-floating and continuing with her passage. Fortunately, there was no damage or pollution.

The grounding occurred in darkness after the vessel had crossed the south west traffic lane of the Dover Strait TSS. The master was alone on the bridge, and he had fallen asleep. The ship manager's written procedures required an additional lookout to be on the bridge during darkness, and for the watch alarm to be used, but neither of these instructions were complied with by any of the bridge watchkeepers on board *Kathrin*.

It is highly probable that the master of *Kathrin* consumed alcohol while on watch and was intoxicated. This was in contravention of the ship manager's alcohol policy, which only permitted its sea staff to consume alcohol up to a level commensurate within prescribed limits, and then only when not on duty. No alcohol test equipment was carried on board, and no arrangements had been made to facilitate random testing.

This was the second alcohol related incident on board *Kathrin* involving the master. In October 2005, the ship was fined \$3500 by Turkish authorities for violation of the rules regarding navigation and collision avoidance in the Dardanelles TSS, after the ship was detected by radar proceeding in the wrong direction in a traffic lane. The master had been alone on the bridge during darkness, had drunk alcohol during his watch, and had left the bridge unattended. He was found in his cabin, asleep.

During the MAIB investigation, a number of non-compliances, with respect to the company's written procedures were identified. Although both company and ship had recently been internally and externally audited, and the ship's operations manager had determined that the incident in October 2005 was due to the master being under the influence of alcohol, none of the non-compliances with written instructions regarding lookout, watch alarms, and leaving the bridge unattended, had been highlighted.

## **Safety Issues – Effectiveness of Safety Management Systems (SMS)**

The operations or management manual lies at the heart of every SMS, yet unless the instructions it contains are complied with, its value is seriously diminished. Masters and crews must be made to understand that what is required in writing is actually meant, and is not simply a means of satisfying regulation. They must also be encouraged to 'embrace' the SMS and understand that it is a tool beneficial to their safety. Therefore, ship owners and managers should ensure that the control measures within their SMS such as audits, inspections, accident and hazardous incident investigation reports are sufficiently robust to promote a safety culture and validate that all written procedures are appropriate and strictly adhered to. The integrity and importance of the SMS may also be enhanced through a "package" of ship visits, senior officer seminars and visits to company offices.

Further details on the accident and the subsequent investigation can be found in the MAIB's investigation report, which is posted on its website:

[www.maib.gov.uk](http://www.maib.gov.uk)

Alternatively, a copy of the report will be sent on request, free of charge.

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